

# Reserve KC-130's to the rescue

Cpl. Stephen L. Standifird

Marine Forces Reserve, New Orleans

**NAPLES, Italy** — Two Marine Corps Reserve squadrons launched two KC-130 Hercules and specially trained crews to the central Mediterranean to provide support for the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) for Exercise Dynamic Response 2000.

What makes this detachment different is that it was the first time a reserve KC-130 squadron has supported the MEU in an out of the continental United States exercise said Capt. Edward M. Grandinetti, assistant operations officer for VMGR-234 out of Fort Worth, Texas.

A Marine Expeditionary Unit is America's small, unique, powerful force in readiness built around a reinforced battalion, a composite aircraft squadron and a MEU Service Support group.

The aviation combat element, which is where the reserve crews fit, is a Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron augmented with four types of helicop-

ters, fixed-wing aircraft such as the AV-8B Harrier jets and the two KC-130 Hercules.

The two reserve aircraft from VMGR-234, Naval Air Station Fort Worth JRB, Fort Worth, Texas, and VMGR-452, Stewart Air National Guard Base, Newburg, N.Y., brought special capabilities like in-flight refueling and tactical transport, not usually available to the MEU Commander.

"The missions we flew in support of the 24th MEU exercise Dynamic Response were predominately fixed wing aerial refueling, logistics flights (moving passengers and cargo), and airborne radio relay," said Grandinetti.

The second major capability is the use of night vision goggles for missions not flown in daylight.

Both crews are highly qualified in night systems operations. Missions they can

perform are night aerial refueling of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, and air delivery by parachute methods or by landing zones. The night vision capability allows all of their missions to be performed at night without the aid of any light.

Using night vision goggles for a night mission creates a



Photo by Cpl. Stephen L. Standifird

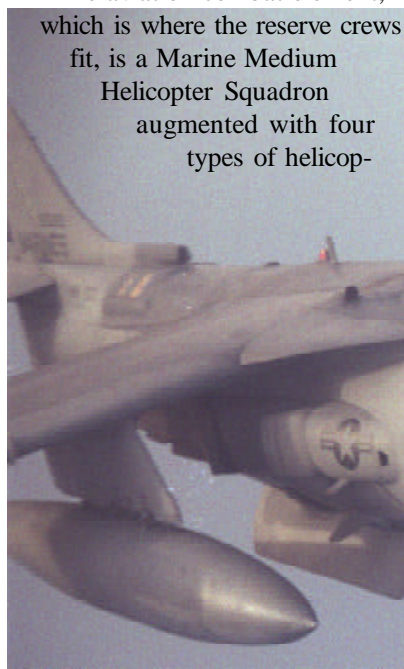


Photo by Cpl. Stephen L. Standifird

**ABOVE:** An AV-8B Harrier from VMA-542, attached to the 24th MEU (SOC), connects to a refueling drogue to receive fuel from a KC-130 Hercules from VMGR-234, Fort Worth, Texas, during Exercise Dynamic Response 2000. **TOP RIGHT:** The KC-130 Hercules from VMGR-234, Fort Worth, Texas, sits alone at the end of the flight deck at the Naval Support Activity, Naples, Italy, on down time during Exercise Dynamic Response 2000.



Photo by Cpl. Stephen L. Standiford

**Staff Sgt. Leslie J. Pharis, loadmaster, VMGR-234, Fort Worth, Texas, monitors the fuel intake in his squadron's KC-130 Hercules on a recent deployment to Naples, Italy, to assist in Exercise Dynamic Response 2000.**

few differences in the operations.

"I prefer doing night missions on goggles because it helps your situational awareness. You can see other aircraft traffic, cloud formations and terrain that you normally wouldn't see," said Grandinetti.

"You have to be more aware of your surroundings," said Cpl. Jeffery K. Nation, first mechanic for VMGR-234. "Your depth perception is a little off, so you have to pay attention."

During the exercise, the crews flew a total of 218.4 hours between the two aircraft, delivered 371,900 lbs. of fuel to the MEU AV-8B Harriers and hauled 53,000 lbs. of cargo and 237 passengers.

Cpl. John D. Sabarese, first mechanic with VMGR-452 said it was good working with both active duty and reserve Marines and learning from each other.

"Being able to get the job done together as Marines and as a unit on deployment to help other Marines was an important and motivating factor of the exercise for some," added Sabarese.

The crews have two more exercises scheduled with the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC) in the Mediterranean, Dynamic Mix in May and Noble Shirley in June.



# 4th MAW wins third straight safety award

**Maj. Paula Buckley**

Marine Forces Reserve, New Orleans

**NEW ORLEANS** — The 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve recently won the Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award and the Admiral James S. Russell Naval Aviation Flight Safety Award for the third consecutive year.

The awards are presented annually to the Navy or Marine Corps command which contributes the most toward readiness and economy of operations through safety. The command selected must have an outstanding safety record and an aggressive safety program.

In the case of the 4<sup>th</sup> MAW, they flew more than 40,000 hours with no Class A or B mishaps, and the fact that 4<sup>th</sup> MAW has won these awards for three consecutive years is unprecedented.

"No Class A or B mishaps shows that 4<sup>th</sup> MAW has not lost an aircraft or had a significant injury to aircrew while conducting flight operations for the last three years," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey J. Macmillan, Safety Officer, 4<sup>th</sup> MAW.

"There are some unique aspects of 4<sup>th</sup> MAW operations that certainly are major contributors to the outstanding safety and readiness record of the Wing," said Maj. Gen. Kevin B. Kuklok, Commanding General, 4<sup>th</sup> MAW. "Our flight crews are a composite of the most qualified, seasoned aircrew and the best of the young lions of Total Force Marine aviation."

"In addition to the flight crews, the 4<sup>th</sup> Wing has a cadre of the most current active component maintainers who, when paired up with our senior reservists, maximize the application of our limited assets to keep the fleet fully mission capable at all times. This blend of young, enthusiastic talent and seasoned veterans, coupled with unit leaders who understand and implement the Risk Management process to empower these maintainers and flight crews, has been essential to our success."

Maj. Gen. Kuklok added, "I am convinced they will raise the bar even higher in the future."

